

should report to the floor because six are excused. Senator Chambers, Senator Schmit, Senator Pappas, Senator Haberman. Senator Chambers, would you record your presence. Senator Warner, Senators' Pappas and Schmit are absent, do you wish to proceed? Is this on a machine vote?

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, the principal argument apparently for killing the bill is that because if the Legislature chose not to fund the optional program and if the Director of the Department chose not to use, or utilize an optional program that the cost could be higher. I would suggest to you that there is absolutely no reason, no reason at all that the Department of Welfare would want to choose an option that would result in costing the state more because much of the Medicaid payments are a significant portion of the budget of various state institutions. So I see no fear in that concern. The issue is that 611 can be a vehicle in addition to the optional services to perhaps do other cost containment legislation by the Legislature, including restrictions if you choose on some of the programs that could be reimbursed in order to bring this cost down or at least within an acceptable range. Again I would point out as I indicated earlier visiting with the department head and the Governor's office this morning that it appears that they are going to have to go to prorating in order to get through the balance of the year or you are facing up to a \$2,471,000 deficit of General Fund, a total deficit by the way of 11.7 million when you include the federal funds and cash funds that might be necessary. There is a second reason also for many of you to give some thought to this because should the enactment of 522 last session be deferred in part, then you are also talking about increased costs on property tax to the counties for their portion unless the bill of course takes effect July 1st, but in either event, the need for the vehicle to consider some real cost containment and still provide adequate health care for these individuals I think are essential. I think it is essential to address now. I indicated that the prorating at least in other states has been subject to court attack and not always successful. Should that happen in Nebraska and then your only option at the moment will be significant deficiency appropriation. I would hope that you would vote to put the bill on General File in order to provide us an opportunity to at least address this issue and perhaps institute some appropriate legislation which will assist in the cost containment which has been in one of the highest growing areas of state budget in